

Section 3 of this report includes a detailed description of the project corridor. Topics covered in detail below include the corridor's character and existing land uses, existing facilities, existing traffic types and volumes, future growth patterns, future traffic volumes, and the existing and future role of transit throughout the area.

3.01 CORRIDOR CHARACTER AND EXISTING LAND USES

A. Cultural and Historical Context

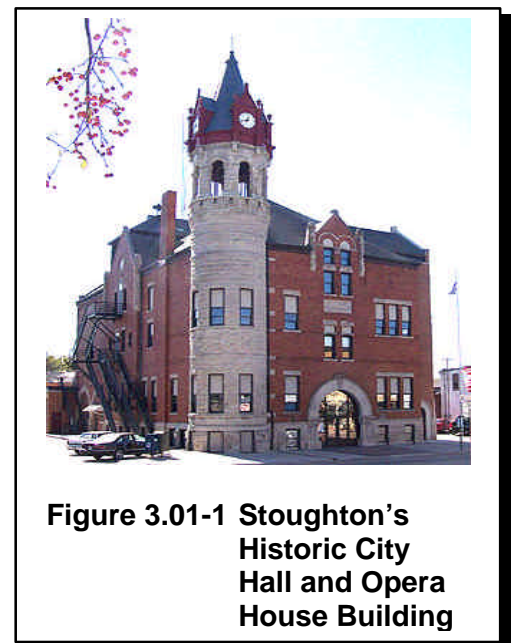
The towns, Village, and City in the study area were platted in the mid-1800s in response to the growing railroad and agricultural industries of the time. Stoughton was an early mill town that became an incorporated village in 1862 and an incorporated city in 1882. McFarland was platted in 1856, the year after the first railroad depot was built. This area, known as Edwards Park, was for many years a popular summer vacation destination for people from southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

A large wave of Norwegian immigrants populated Stoughton in the 1880s and 1890s to work in the city's expanding wagon and tobacco industries. Early development consisted of home sites, flour mills, wagon factories, machine shops, tobacco warehouses, and other mercantile establishments. By 1905, when the city's population reached 4,200, the Norwegian language and culture were evident throughout the community and Stoughton became one of the most "Norwegian" communities in the United States. That heritage is reflected today in local place names, festivals and customs. In 2000, nearly 30 percent of Stoughton's residents reported Norwegian ancestry (German was the most common ancestry reported with 38.6 percent).

There are several buildings and districts in the City of Stoughton listed in the National Register of Historic Place (NRHP, see figure 3.01-1) and three sites in the Village of McFarland. In addition to state and nationally designated landmarks, the State Historical Society's Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) contains data on a wide range of historic properties throughout the state. There are 89 AHI documented structures, including 68 houses, in the Village of McFarland and nearly 1,300 documented structures in the City of Stoughton. The State Historic Society (SHS) identifies archeological sites. As of January 2003, SHS identified 62 sites and cemeteries in the Stoughton area and over 20 in McFarland. Many of these sites are located along the Yahara River.

B. Physical Character

The topography in the planning area is characteristic of the rolling morainal terrain found in the central portion of Dane County immediately east of Wisconsin's Driftless Area – an area that was bypassed by glaciers during the Ice Age. The corridor lies within the Yahara River valley which, except for the area



south of Lake Kegonsa, is a ground moraine area consisting of relatively flat or undulating glacial deposits, including many wetlands formed by glaciers.

Surface water features include:

- The Yahara River, which runs north to south, drains Lakes Kegonsa and Waubesa and the entire Dane County chain of lakes (Mendota, Monona, Waubesa, Kegonsa, and Wingra) and empties into the Rock River to the south. The Yahara River is prone to occasional flooding, especially during times of high snow melt or large amounts of rain.
- Lake Kegonsa, covering 2,716 acres in area, prominent surface water feature north of the city of Stoughton. The lake was formed when glacial moraines dammed the Yahara River Valley. It is relatively shallow, with a maximum depth of 31 feet, and supports a diverse warm water fishery including bass, blue gill, crappie, perch, walleye, and rough fish.
- Lake Waubesa, also formed when glacial moraines dammed the Yahara River. This relatively shallow, 2,133-acre lake reaches a maximum depth of 34 feet and provides good and relatively consistent fish production with periodic stocking of walleye. The Waubesa wetland areas provide a major spawning bed for northern pike. Common fish species in the lake include large-mouth bass, blue gill, crappie, perch, walleye, northern pike, and sunfish.
- Lower Mud Lake, a natural widening of the Yahara River just south of the village of McFarland. This shallow, 195-acre water body reaches a maximum depth of 5 feet. Lower Mud Lake is completely encircled by shallow marsh and sedge meadow. In addition to the river flow, small springs and seepage in the surrounding marshland feed Lower Mud Lake.

Farming and agricultural activities dominate land use in the towns of Albion, Dunkirk, Dunn, Pleasant Springs, and Rutland. Farm commodities produced in the planning area include beef, dairy, corn, tobacco, oats, alfalfa, soybeans, and canning crops. These towns have adopted land use plans that have been incorporated into Dane County's *Farmland Preservation Plan* and have also adopted the County's exclusive agricultural zoning ordinance, which limits nonfarm development in the rural areas to some extent. The State Farmland Preservation Program provides income tax credits to property owners who agree to keep their land in agricultural use. As of the mid 1990s, more than 40 percent of each town's farmland acreage was enrolled under this program.

The agricultural landscape along the corridor enhances the area's aesthetic appeal and reinforces the separation from the Madison metropolitan area. The seasonal changes of growing crops, the colors and textures of farm fields, and the architecturally significant farm buildings all contribute to the rural landscape surrounding the corridor south of the village of McFarland.

The natural resources, especially the environmentally sensitive areas with respect to floodplains, soils, steep slopes, and wetlands, are critical factors in local decision making. Long-term preservation of these natural features is identified as a goal in the communities' comprehensive plans, to preserve the

visual attractiveness of the landscape and prevent severe development or environmental problems that may be difficult and costly to correct in the future. Environmental corridors are of particular concern because they contain almost all of the best remaining woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat. Protection of these corridors from additional intrusion by incompatible land uses is a core planning objective in the communities along the corridor.

C. Existing Land Uses

Existing land uses along the corridor are shown in Figure 3.01-2 (page 3-4). In general, nonresidential uses and a full range of urban residential uses are focused in Stoughton and McFarland, while lower density residential and agricultural uses are found in the Towns and exurban areas of the corridor.

1. Nonresidential Land Uses: Commercial and office developments make up the majority of land uses along the USH 51 corridor in the Village and City. There are also some limited office uses interspersed with business uses along USH 51 and in the downtown areas. Industrial uses in McFarland include the large petroleum terminals, or “tank farms,” north of the Village along Terminal Drive and USH 51. These terminals are owned and operated by several companies including U.S. Oil, Koch Pipeline, Citgo, Cenex, and Exxon Mobil. In Stoughton, strip commercial areas are generally found along USH 51 on both the east and especially the west sides of the City. Most of the recent commercial development has occurred on the west side. A few individual projects on the west side have Planned Business characteristics with more landscaping, architectural design and modest signage. Fleetguard-Nelson, an international corporation that includes designing and manufacturing products for heavy-duty diesel powered equipment, has offices along USH 51 on the west side of the city. Stoughton Trailers, a semi trailer manufacturer, and several other industries are located just south of USH 51 on the southeast side of the City.
2. Residential Land Uses: Generally, mostly low-density residential land uses are found in the unincorporated towns. Housing in the towns is at fairly low densities or is associated with farm operations. The following describe the exceptions:
 - There is a fairly large pocket of single-family residential neighborhoods along USH 51 in central and east Stoughton.
 - Residential housing is also located between USH 51 and Lake Kegonsa. Approximately one-tenth of the population of the Town of Dunn is located in a 250-unit mobile home park off Charles Lane.
 - Although not directly off of USH 51, approximately 2,027 people live along Lake Waubesa within the Waubesa Limited Service Area (LSA) where sanitary sewer service is provided.